# The Influence of Schooling and Relocation on the G/ui pupil Companionship

AUTHOR(S):

AKIYAMA, Hiroyuki

CITATION:

AKIYAMA, Hiroyuki. The Influence of Schooling and Relocation on the G/ui pupil Companionship. African study monographs. Supplementary issue 2001, 26: 197-208

ISSUE DATE:

2001-03

URL:

https://doi.org/10.14989/68399

# THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOOLING AND RELOCATION ON THE G/UI PUPIL COMPANIONSHIP

Hiroyuki AKIYAMA
*Graduate School of Human and Environmental Studies, Kyoto University*

ABSTRACT This paper describes the companionship patterns in size and composition of Central San children to explore the influences of relocation and schooling, the two epochal events for children in the last 50 years.

In the Central Kalahari Game Reserve of Botswana, San children formerly played only with relatives. Especially the elder pupils nowadays often become schoolmates who are not kin. Relocation and schooling brought about children's exposure to nonrelatives. Schoolmate is a new option for San children to make friend with others.

Key Words: Central San; Children; Companionship; Influence of schooling and relocation; Kinship; Age difference

## INTRODUCTION

### I. Background

Central San (G/ui and G//ana), the hunter-gatherers living in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) of Republic of Botswana, have experienced two fundamental changes in their habitational style(1).

At one time, their camps(2) were rather small. One camp consisted of about 10 families were all related kins. Because each camp stood far away, children seldom played with other children who were not related.

The G/ui and G//ana have settled around Xade under governmental policy of Remote Area Development Program since the middle of 1970's. This shortened the distance among camps, within about five kilometers. Xade Primary School and Clinic were established at the center of Xade to further encourage the G/ui and G//ana to live near the center. Children from distant camps lodged with relatives living near the center to go to school. So children now meet other children whose kin relation is unknown to them both in and out of school.

Furthermore, the residents of CKGR were relocated out of the reserve under the governmental policy. The new settlement resulted in a much higher population density. This brought about tremendous changes upon the G/ui and G//ana habitational style. Houses no longer formed a camp arranged in a circle, but are built in rows close to each other as the government planned. This is a new arrangement for the G/ui and G//ana who had lived in CKGR.

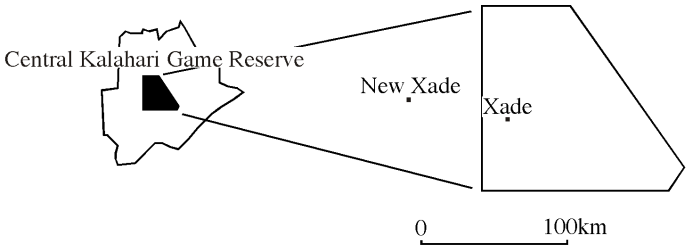


**Fig. 1**. Map of Central Kalahari Game Reserve, Xade, and New Xade.

## II. Issues

It has been demonstrated that the San society is organized through kinship ties (Marshall, 1960; Tanaka, 1980; Silberbauer, 1981). The children had little chance to meet other children who were not kin. And probably they never saw another child of kin if she or he lived in another camp, because children rarely visited other camps.

From the 1980's, the G/ui settled around Xade. So children could visit other camps if they wanted to. Also, schooling gave children the chance to meet many other children including nonrelatives. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that pupil companionship changed from the traditional one. This is the first issue I want to investigate in this paper.

In 1997, the G/ui were moved to New Xade. This social change probably had the most serious impact on the G/ui society during the last 50 years. The pattern of residence formed in New Xade is the same as in other Botswanian villages. In New Xade, even more children came together to meet other children they did not know well. The second issue is therefore how the pupil companionship in New Xade is structured.

Finally, I will discuss San children's companionship in general, which has not been discussed in the preceding studies on the San. I will specially focus on the age difference of the children's companionship.

# METHOD

## I. Research Areas

The field research was conducted in two areas (Fig. 1). One was Xade, where the government started the Remote Area Development Program in 1974. Gradually the G/ui came to settle around Xade because of regular water supply and maize rations as drought relief. When Xade Primary School was established in 1984, the population of Xade grew to between 500 and 600. In the end of the 1980's, the population reached around 800 (Tanaka, 1991).

The other research area was New Xade, located 70 kilometers west of Xade. The government planned to convert the game reserve into a national park in 1977 and

**Table 1**. Focal boys for group composition.

| | age | | age | | age |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 10 | D | 13 | G | 14 |
| B | 10 | E | 14 | H | 15 |
| C | 10 | F | 14 | | |
| Younger Pupils | | Elder Pupils | | School-leavers | |

forced all the residents of the reserve to move out. The government prepared a new settlement, New Xade, to which not only many Xade residents moved but also the people from other areas. The population density of New Xade thus reached 100 times that of Xade.

## II. Research Periods

My research was divided into three periods: First at Xade, the data used in this paper were collected from February to May 1997. Secondly, I conducted research at New Xade in July 1997. Third research was at New Xade from December 1997 to February 1998.

These periods correspond to the three phases of settlement change; before, during, and after the relocation. The relocation to New Xade started in May 1997. It had not finished yet in July. About 60% of the residents in Xade had moved to New Xade by the end of that month. When I visited New Xade again in December, all the residents of Xade had moved. For convenience, I will hereafter call the first period Xade, the second period New Xade1 and the third period New Xade2.

## III. Method

To investigate the above-mentioned three issues, I analyzed play groups of pupils with regard to two aspects. One was the group size and the other was the group composition. I compared two age groups of pupils aged 10 and pupils aged 13 to 14. I analyzed the influence of schooling and relocation on the pupil companionship and assessed the magnitude of this influence by comparing the group compositions of three periods, before, during, and after the relocation.

I used focal child sampling for analyzing the composition of pupil play groups. Table 1 shows the subjects for my intensive observation. All these children were G/ui boys. All three boys on the left column were aged 10. The boys in the middle column were aged about 13 or 14. I will call A, B and C, the "younger pupils" and D, E and F, the "elder pupils." The two on the right column, G and H, are about the same age as the "elder pupils," but they left school in the early stages of Standard 1 and 2.

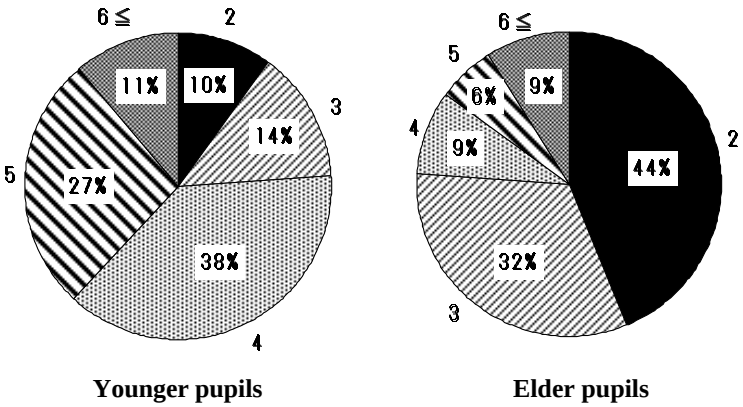


**Fig. 2**. Group size at Xade.

## RESULTS

### I. Group Size

The analysis of group size is designed to find difference between the playing patterns of the two age groups and to point out the influence of relocation. I observed five focal pupils for each of the two groups. When I saw a focal pupil, I recorded how many children he was with. Groups that included adults were excluded from this analysis.

The two pie charts of Fig. 2 show the group size of pupils playing as observed in Xade. Younger pupils tended to gather in groups of four or five children while elder pupils tended to gather in groups of two or three.

Fig. 3 shows the group size for New Xade1. It is striking that younger pupils more often gathered in larger groups of six or more than that in Xade. By contrast, elder pupils rarely formed groups of six or more. The difference coincided with the popularity of soccer game among younger pupils in this period.

Fig. 4 shows change in group size frequencies. For younger pupils, the figure for groups of four and five children decreased, while that of groups of six or more increased. For elder pupils, by contrast, groups of two and three children decreased whereas for groups of four and five children increased.

Play group size in New Xade was larger than that in Xade. The average play group size of younger pupils rose from 4.7 to 6.0, and that of elder pupils rose from 3.13 to 3.6. This was influenced by the large growth in population density caused by the relocation.

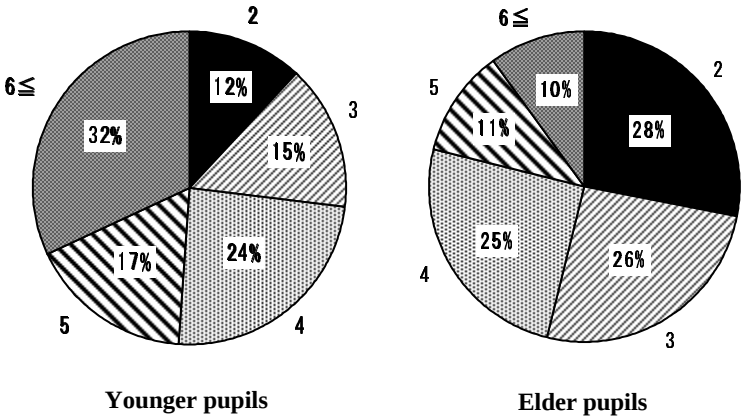


**Fig. 3**. Group size at New Xade1.

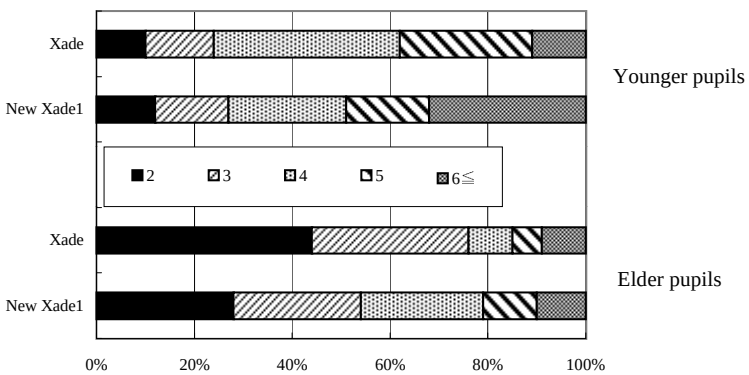


**Fig. 4**. Change in group size.

## II. Group Composition

1. *Xade - before relocation*

This analysis was designed to find differences in group composition for the two age groups. I counted the continuous contacts of the focal child. This analysis was expected to reveal the influence of schooling.

Table 2 shows the raw data on group composition. The number of children with whom a focal child played with for over 30 minutes were counted. Bar charts of Fig. 5 - 9 were made from this table.

**Table 2**. Raw data of group composition.

| research period | Xade | | | | New Xade1 | | | | New Xade2 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| relation | non* | off* | nei* | total | non | off | nei | total | non | off | nei | total |
| individual | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A | 0 | 22 | 254 | 276 | 89 | 28 | 37 | 154 | 5 | 26 | 224 | 255 |
| B | 0 | 53 | 257 | 310 | 60 | 17 | 36 | 113 | 0 | 74 | 212 | 286 |
| C | 7 | 45 | 185 | 237 | 82 | 46 | 19 | 147 | 18 | 30 | 181 | 229 |
| D | 110 | 72 | 30 | 212 | 56 | 31 | 17 | 104 | 90 | 52 | 21 | 163 |
| E | 93 | 51 | 45 | 189 | 64 | 16 | 32 | 112 | 125 | 46 | 101 | 272 |
| F | 110 | 54 | 92 | 256 | 77 | 25 | 46 | 148 | 77 | 44 | 81 | 202 |
| G | 6 | 130 | 141 | 277 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| H | 3 | 105 | 183 | 291 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

*non = nonrelatives, off = offsite relatives, nei = neighboring relatives.

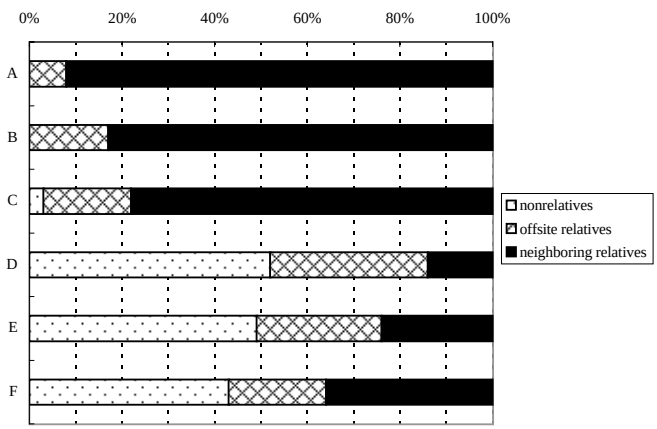


**Fig. 5**. Group composition (Xade).

Children were classified into three categories: nonrelatives, offsite relatives and neighboring relatives. Most children classified as nonrelatives were schoolmates of the focal child. Offsite relatives had kinship links known to the focal child but did not live near his camp. Neighboring relatives had kinship links with the focal child and lived in or within five minutes' walk of his camp.

Fig. 5 shows the categories of the children with whom each pupil had formed a group at Xade. There is a significant difference between younger and elder pupils. Younger pupils did not keep company with nonrelatives for over 30 minutes, whereas elder pupils often formed a group with nonrelatives. About 50% of the children with whom the focal pupils kept continuous contacts were nonrelatives. By contrast, younger pupils' play groups were mostly restricted to neighboring relatives.

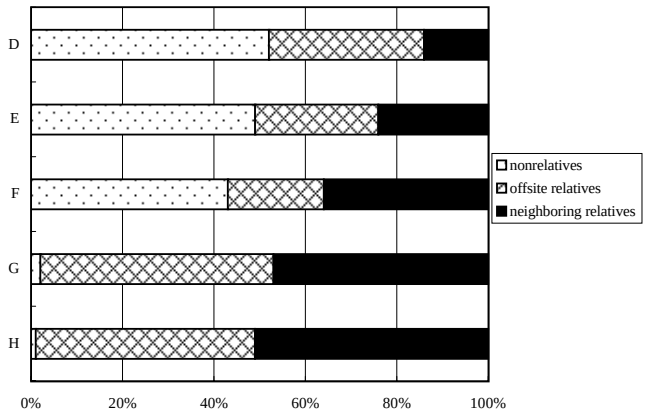


**Fig. 6**. Group composition comparing with school-leavers (Xade).

Fig. 6 shows schooling influence on pupil companionship. The bar charts compare the elder pupils with boys who left school. All were aged between 13 and 15. The elder pupils formed groups with nonrelatives at a rate of about 50%, whereas the early school-leavers seldom had contact with nonrelatives just as the younger pupils.

The difference between the contacts of early school-leavers and younger pupils were seen in the number of contacts with offsite and neighboring relatives. The school-leavers tended to be with offsite relatives more frequently than the younger pupils did.

One more distinction between the elder boys' play group and that of the younger boys was that while elder pupils and school-leavers principally gathered with boys about the same age, younger pupils often played with boys three to five years younger than them.

2. *New Xade1 - during relocation*

Younger pupils' companionship seemed to be free from influences of schooling at Xade, before relocation. They seemed to prefer neighboring relatives to schoolmates. However, they played with schoolmates if they wanted to. Fig. 7 shows that they actually played with schoolmates during relocation. These bar charts were created in the same way as Fig6 with data gathered at New Xade1. During the relocation period, younger pupils made a continuous contacts with nonrelatives and schoolmates, as often as elder pupils did.

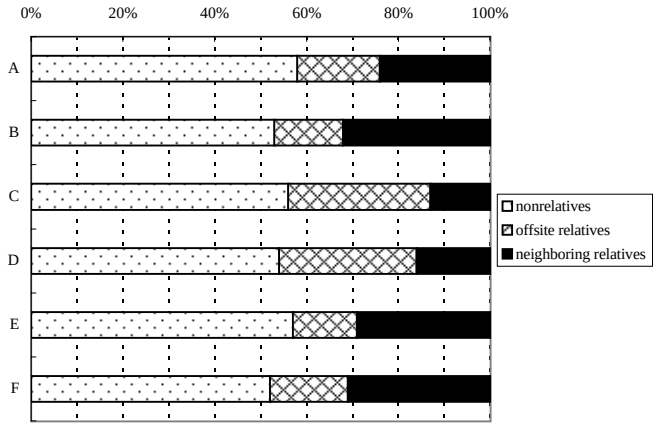


**Fig. 7**. Group composition (New Xade1).

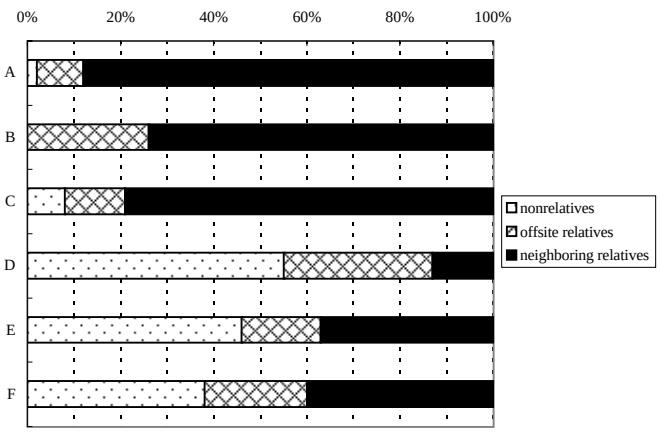


**Fig. 8**. Group composition (New Xade2).

3. *New Xade2 - after relocation*

The above observation was, however, just temporarily. Fig. 8 shows how younger pupils still markedly preferred relatives to schoolmates at New Xade2. Fig. 8 is very similar to Fig.6 which shows group composition of Xade. The composition of play groups in New Xade2, after relocation, returned to that of Xade, before relocation.

Fig. 9 is designed to compare the three periods by bringing together the results of Fig. 6, 7 and 8. Each bar chart consists of the average composition of playmate category for the three pupils. While the elder pupils showed no significant change throughout all the research periods, younger pupils showed clear shifts in

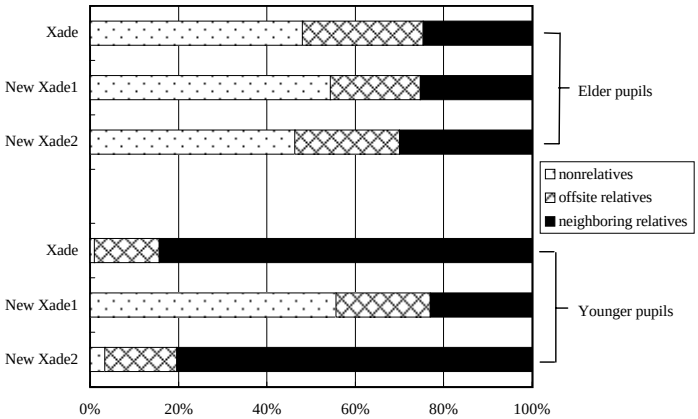


**Fig. 9**. Change in group composition.

the playmate composition. They played with nonrelatives in the transitional period of relocation, but after relocation, companionship reverted to the pattern before relocation even if many nonrelatives lived near-by.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### I. Summary

My research demonstrated that schooling has had a significant impact on the elder pupils' companionship. They played as often with nonrelatives, or schoolmates, as with relatives while boys of the same age who left school tended to be with relatives only.

In contrast, younger pupils' companionship composition shifted but returned mainly to kins. Only during the period of relocation, younger pupils' play groups were larger, and included nonrelatives as often as the elder pupils. Elder pupils' play groups remained unchanged before, during, and after relocation in terms of its composition, but group size at New Xade1 grew somewhat.

### II. Influences of Schooling and Relocation

I argue that schooling brought about flexibility to children's companionship. Boys at adolescence tend to gather with other boys of the same age. But this was not possible or common for the elder pupils when the camps were arranged by kinship and far apart, with few boys of the same age in the same camp. If they preferred to be with schoolmates and not with younger relatives, schooling has made this possible. Companionship is no longer restricted to relatives.

For younger pupils, there was a potential impact of schooling on companionship, because they preferred playing with nonrelatives during relocation.

Relocation also had a direct impact on pupil companionship, because higher population density seemed to have bought about enlargement of group size.

## III. San Children's Companionship

There is no detailed report about San children's companionship, but the distance between camps and the kinship arrangement made it usual for the San children to play with only relatives.

Since the relocation, I assumed that the children played with not only relatives but also nonkin schoolmates. However, the fact is not so. The younger pupils' companionship is mostly restricted to relatives. While there is ample opportunity for the children to play with schoolmates now, and in fact they played with nonrelatives during the relocation period, they wouldn't do so after the relocation. This means the kinship ties is still the most important motivation for companionship of the boys aged about 10, as was the case traditionally.

In contrast, the elder pupils often play with schoolmates. With whom did a boy at this age play before settling around Xade? Judging from the companionship pattern of the school-leavers, they have played with offsite relatives, even if his camp was far from the other camps. It is also possible that they played with relatives in the same camp as the younger boys. If the latter was the case, the elder boys' companionship changed after settling around Xade. I found that G/ui children's present companionship pattern is different between boys aged about 10 and boys aged 13 to 15. How such a difference between such age groups in old days was should be investigated in the future studies.

## IV. Why Do Elder Pupils Associate with Nonrelatives?

That an elder pupil plays in a smaller and more steady group with members of about the same age may be related to the San visiting activity which start when society members become young men.

Visiting is a typical social activity to the adolescent and older San. It is considered that the visiting activity functions to exchange information and goods, establish link among camps, amuse, and carry out other social and economic functions (e.g., Tanaka, 1980; Sugawara, 1988). For an adolescent, in particular, it provides the opportunity of seeking his future bride (Tanaka, 1980), and comprises one of the first commitments to adulthood. G/ui and G//ana youths visited camps alone or with one or two friends in Xade.

I hypothesize that the elder pupils' companionship is a preparatory stage to the visiting activity. Naturally older boys prefer boys of the same age to younger ones for companionship. Where boys of the same age had to be found in other camps with offsite relatives, now schoolmates provide possible companionship at hand. In effect, it may mean that more than kinship ties, the age is the key factor for the elder pupils when they choose a friend from among their schoolmates.

## V. Why Do Younger Pupils Prefer Relatives to Play with?

The fact that younger pupils' companionship returned to mainly kins after relocation may show how strong the kinship bond is for their age. They preferred neighboring relatives to nonrelatives after playing with schoolmates. Kinship ties has priority over the age in younger pupils' companionship. This deserves a further investigation.

San boys, who at age 10 tend to gather among four to five boys, make a smaller and steadier group in adolescence. I hypothesize that the group size difference of 2-3 for the elder pupils and 4-5 for the younger pupils indicate that the manner of interaction among the younger pupils is more complicated than that among elder pupils. The small group of companionship among the elder pupils may be akin to a dyad, a face to face relation of friendship. The younger pupils, for whatever underlying reason, have a large group to play in and need to get along more children at once. They may easily do that among the familiar neighboring relatives, but not so among nonrelatives. They may feel more at ease among the neighboring relatives they have known since their infancy.

In other words, kinship may partly control the interaction among younger boys. A more detailed analyses of interaction among children is necessary to test this hypothesis.

## NOTES

(1) This historical description is constructed from literature (Tanaka, 1976; 1980; 1987; 1991; Sugawara, 1988; 1991; Silberbauer, 1981). The description about the traditional children's companionship is my construct from the literature. Description of New Xade is based on my direct observation.
(2) Residential group of nuclear families.

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——— Accepted *September 25, 2000*

Author's Name and Address: Hiroyuki AKIYAMA, *Center for African Area Studies, Kyoto University, 46 Yoshida-shimoadachi-cho, Sakyo, Kyoto, 606-8501, E-Mail: akiyama@jambo.africa.kyoto-u.ac.jp*